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AGAWAM

ADVERTISER NEWS

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High school set to host graduation ceremony



FILE PHOTO

Last year's AHS graduation was a drive-thru ceremony held outside behind Agawam Junior High School. Protocols were much stricter and a more in-person graduation is set to be held on the grounds of Agawam High School on Saturday, June 5.

By **Shelby Macri**
smacri@turley.com

AGAWAM – The Agawam High School Graduation Ceremony will be held on the campus on Saturday, June 5 at 2 p.m.

The rain date is scheduled for the following day on Sunday at the same time, the school sent out surveys to students and parents asking how they'd like to hold the ceremony. The response was to have it on campus but also have more people present, the original on campus ceremony had a limit of two guests per graduate.

However, as state guidelines changes the school adapted and is now able to hold the ceremony on campus, with each graduate able to bring six guests.

"There will be a virtual, live stream of the ceremony for those family members unable to attend," Principal Thomas Schnepf said. "We're renting a stage, chairs, a big screen and more; the screen will be set up that day for people in the back rows to be able to see the ceremony better."

Schnepf said there will be no tents as tent rental are expensive and the costs of renting the chairs, stage and other elements make it expensive already. Another additional cost that came to light during planning was the turf of the stadium.

Schnepf said it would be expensive to hold the ceremony on the stadium field because the stage rental, all the equipment, and the heels of people on the field will ruin the turf; and fixing the turf is very costly. To avoid another cost and to keep the turf as cared for as possible, the ceremony has been moved to the auxiliary soccer and field hockey fields, located next to the tennis courts in between the parking lot and the stadium.

Schnepf shared that the ceremony will be shorter this year; with only three student speakers the valedictorian, salutatorian, and the class president. Though Schnepf and Superintendent Shelia Hoffman will speak.

GRADUATION | page 5

Councilors support 'wish' of federal funds for sewers

By **Gregory A. Scibelli**
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM – Last Monday night, the Agawam City Council unanimously supported a resolution to ask its legislative delegation to seek nearly \$50 million in funding to install sewers in the Southwest portion of Feeding Hills.

City councilors, including resolution sponsor George Bitzas, are eyeing the billions of dollars President Joe Biden is proposing to spend on massive infrastructure improvements across the country.

But according to early projects, the Southwest Sewer Project would not be eligible for what the federal funds are being earmarked for. Councilors, none the less, still spoke in favor of seeking out the funds.

Councilor Rosemary Sandlin said there is never any harm in

asking, but it does not mean the funding has any possibility of coming to fruition.

It is not known what projects in Agawam potential infrastructure money could be used for. The town is currently on the cusp of another big infrastructure project being completed as the area around and including the Morgan-Sullivan Bridge has been re-constructed, widened, and much-improved. The Feeding Hills center intersection was also recently completed and more projects are set to get underway with already approved projects from the state.

The council will call on its Congressman, U.S. Rep. Richard Neal, to advocate for the town on the sewer project.

Councilor Robert Rossi had strong words about sewer issue. Rossi has been advocating to get

SEWERS | page 11

Softball gets big win



PHOTO BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

The Agawam High School softball team got its season started with a big 12-0 win over Minnechaug Regional last Friday afternoon at home. It was Agawam's first spring game since 2019. The 2020 season was lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic. More photos from the game are on page 7.

Police officer injured during traffic detail

By **Gregory A. Scibelli**
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM – Construction has been going on near the Morgan-Sullivan Bridge for the past three years, and with the work nearly complete, an Agawam police officer was struck and injured during a traffic detail.

Sgt. Anthony Grasso was directing traffic in front of Agawam Town Hall on Main Street last Thursday morning, around the time school begins, and was struck by a car.

Grasso was taken to the hospital, but his injuries were not reported to be life-threatening.

The incident cause a huge closure of the area and traffic had to be re-routed down Reed Street for those who were heading northbound on Main Street, also known as Rte. 159.

It was the only incident that has happened during the re-construction of the bridge and sur-

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Regular City Council meeting agenda - May 17

Agawam Junior High School
1305 Springfield Street, Feeding Hills, MA. 01030
Monday, May 17, 2021, 7:00 P.M.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS MEETING IS NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Any member of the public desiring to submit input or comments under the CITIZEN’S SPEAK TIME portion of this meeting may submit their comments in advance of the meeting but NO LATER THAN 5:00PM on the day of the meeting to the Council Administrative Assistant, Barbara Bard, at bbard@agawam.ma.us. Please include your name and address with your input or comments and your input or comments will be read into the record of the meeting.

AGENDA

- A. ROLL CALL
- B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- C. CITIZEN’S SPEAK TIME ***SUSPENDED ***
Only electronically submitted comments from members of the public that are received prior to the meeting but no later than 5:00pm on the day of the meeting, will be read into the record of the meeting
- D. MINUTES
 - 1. Regular Council Meeting – May 3, 2021
- E. DECLARATION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT
 - 1. Introduction of the new Superintendent of Public Works – Mario Mazza
- F. PRESENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS
 - 1. TR-2021-32 - A Resolution to accept M.G.L. Chapter 200A, Section 9A regarding abandoned funds (Mayor Sapelli) (Referred to Finance Committee)
 - 2. TR-2021-33 - A Resolution confirming the reappointment of Francis J. Curnow, 115 Forest Hill Road, Feeding Hills, MA to the Agawam Veterans’ Council to a term expiring April 1, 2024 (Mayor Sapelli)

- G. ELECTIONS
- H. PUBLIC HEARINGS
 - 1. TR-2021-31 (PH-2021-2) - A Resolution adopting the Fiscal Year 2022- 2026 Capital Improvement Program (Mayor Sapelli) (Referred to Finance Committee)
 - 2. TOR-2021-2 (PH-2021-3) - An Ordinance to amend Section 147 of Chapter 180 of the Code of the Town of Agawam (Mayor Sapelli) (Two Readings Required) Public Hearing date set for June 7 , 2021 (Referred to Legislative Committee)
 - 3. TOR-2021-3 (PH-2021-4) - An Ordinance to amend Section 124 of Chapter 180 of the Code of the Town of Agawam (Mayor Sapelli) (Two Readings Required) Public Hearing date set for June 7, 2021 (Referred to Legislative Committee)
- I. OLD BUSINESS
 - 1. TO-2021-8 - A Budgetary Transfer of \$1,800.00 from Law Department Professional Services (#11512-52190) to Law Department Regular/Temporary (#11511-51020) (Referred to Finance Committee)
 - 2. TO-2021-9 - A Budgetary Transfer of \$26,158.50 from the Reserve Fund (#16605-57300) to DPW Snow and Ice Equipment Rental (#14202-52071) (Mayor Sapelli) (Referred to Finance Committee)
 - 3. TO-2021-10 - A Municipal Golf Course Budgetary Transfer of \$25,000.00 from the Reserve Fund (#16605-57300) into Municipal Golf Course Food & Service Supplies (#65263-52220) (Mayor Sapelli) (Referred to Finance Committee)
- J. NEW BUSINESS
 - 1. Unavailable at press time.
- K. ANY OTHER MATTER THAT MAY LEGALLY COME BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL
- L. ADJOURNMENT

Rotary Club holding virtual auction May 22

AGAWAM – The Agawam Rotary Club will host a Virtual Art Auction on Saturday, May 22, at 7 p.m. Preview and Pre-bidding will be on May 20 starting at 9 a.m.

The vendor for this event, Marlin Art, Inc. has partnered with the Agawam Rotary Club in the past and has an excellent reputation for quality art offerings. The artwork is framed and matted, ready to hang, and will be sent directly to your door. To help make the auction a success, the Club is offering a small incentive for those who register as bidders. Two raffle prize drawings will be held for a chance to win a \$25 gift card. The first drawing will be held on May 12 and the second on May 19. Those who sign up by May 12 will be entered into both drawings. There is no cost or obligation to buy anything, but you must register to participate in the auction and raffle.

To register, go to <https://bit.ly/3h4kEyn>

For those unfamiliar with Rotary, the Agawam Rotary Club is a member of Rotary International, a group of over 1.2 million like-minded people, business professionals, educators, retirees, etc. who pledge in all they do to make the world a better place, both globally and locally. Rotary’s principal motto is “service above self”. In addition to supporting international projects such as promoting clean water and sanitation, child and maternal health, and the eradication of Polio, the Club supports a variety of local organizations including the Parish Cupboard Food Pantry, Junior Achievement, Girl Scouts, The Salvation Army, and the Springfield Rescue Mission among others. The Agawam Rotary Club has distributed medical face masks to front line workers, safety reflectors for walkers, cameras for the local NICU, helped with Connecticut River cleanup, and other activities benefitting our community. Sharing this fundraiser with your family, friends, Clubs and communities will help the Agawam Rotary Club do good in the world while enhancing your home or office.

Please visit www.AgawamRotary.org for more information. Questions may be sent to AgawamRotary-Club@gmail.com.

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Town seek input on climate change

AGAWAM – Climate change is increasing the frequency of extreme weather and the Town of Agawam invites its residents to respond to a survey about local experiences associated with this change.

Planning and Community Development Director Marc Strange notes, “With survey results, we are hoping to get a better sense of experience throughout town and to also gauge support for efforts that could help the Town better adapt to climate change and improve quality of life.”

The survey has a total of 12 questions and respondents will have the option to enter to win one of four \$25 prepaid gift cards.

Agawam residents can take the survey at the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AgawamClimate>

The survey, prepared by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission in collaboration with Town officials and engineering consultants Woodard & Curran, is part of a larger project related to assessing

Agawam’s current and future vulnerabil-

ity to localized flooding as resulting from more frequent and more intense precipitation events.

The project, implemented with funding from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs under the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Grant Program, includes the development of a town-wide stormwater master plan by Woodard & Curran; an artist-in-residency program among Agawam Public School’s fifth grade classes, led by Enchanted Circle and the Hitchcock Center for the Environment; and a review of municipal code for best practices in climate resilience conducted by Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

The project is scheduled to complete by June 30, 2021.

This project was selected and refined from a list of priority strategies related to climate change adaption created by Town staff and stakeholders in 2019 at the Agawam Community Resilience Building

Workshop and described in the resulting Summary of Findings report, also funded by the Municipal Vulnerability Grant Program and facilitated by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

The MVP Grant Program emphasizes “nature-based solutions” to the challenges posed by our changing climate. Nature-based solutions are so-called because they tend to stress working with, or mimicking, natural systems in order to solve or alleviate infrastructural, environmental, and/or social vulnerabilities to climate change impacts.

Nature-based solutions have been shown to have wide-ranging co-benefits not associated with traditional “gray” infrastructure (such as storm sewer pipes). Examples of nature-based solutions can include:

alleviating stormwater flooding by reducing impervious cover, such as pavement, and installing vegetated systems, such as planted raingardens or bioswales, in park-

ing lots or along roadways to slow the flow of stormwater runoff and provide an opportunity for infiltration into the ground

reducing the effects of extreme heat and associated reduction in air quality by installing trees along public rights-of-way and in public spaces to shade hard surfaces and reduce ambient air temperature through evapotranspiration.

By responding to the survey, residents will be able to help shape how and where the Town prioritizes nature-based solutions in tandem with gray infrastructure to reduce flooding and other impacts of climate change.

A recorded presentation about Agawam’s current MVP grant project can be found here: <https://youtu.be/RF9YBZ4Z-TZY>

And the town’s original Summary of Findings report, from which came the idea for the current project, can be found here: <https://www.agawam.ma.us/565/Municipal-Vulnerability-Preparedness-MVP>

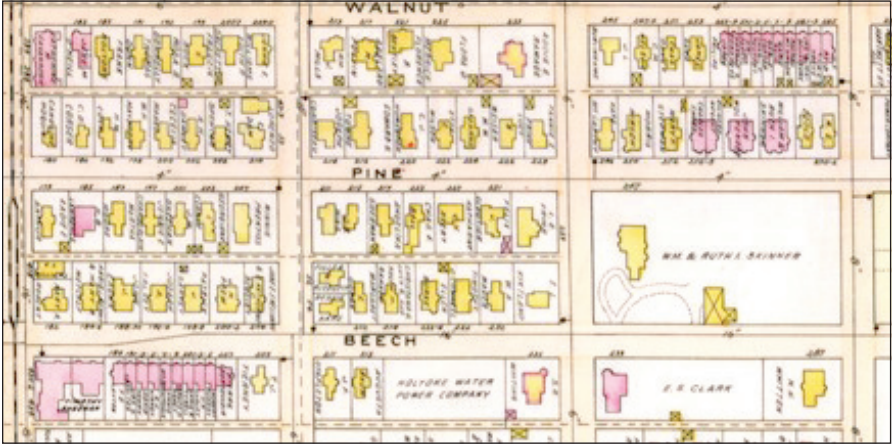
Campbell to give lecture on historic maps May 19

HOLYOKE – On Wednesday, May 19, at 4 p.m. Sara Campbell will give a virtual talk on researching historic maps.

For the family researcher, learning about the places our ancestors lived helps put their lives in perspective. This talk helps us understand the history of map-making, categories of maps that can be used, and where to look for maps relevant to one’s research. Correlating maps with other records of the time period helps us find details that might not have been uncovered otherwise. Select

local and regional maps will be used to illustrate the information historic maps can and cannot provide.

About the speaker: Sara Campbell is a professional engineer with a passion for genealogy research that began when she dove into her own family history in 1990. An experienced lecturer, educator, author, and editor, she speaks to library groups and societies around the region. Her two talks for the Holyoke History Room (May 19 and June 9) draw on Sara’s knowledge of local land records.



Feline Friends holding fundraiser

AGAWAM – Feline Friends Inc. Cat Sanctuary of Feeding Hills will be holding a food/supply drive at Dave’s Soda & Pet City on Saturday, May 15 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Volunteers will be accepting food, litter, treats & monetary donations for our kitties. Opened bags/boxes will also be accepted.

Feline Friends Inc. is a community-based, nonprofit cat sanctuary that does not euthanize or discriminate against any cat based on age, gender or disability.

Thank you to everyone who donated at our last drive on April 3. We enjoyed talking to everyone. Special thanks to Girl Scout Troop 65068 for their generous donation.

Please continue to use our Friends of Dave’s card when shopping at Dave’s.

Dave’s Soda and Pet City, a valued sponsor, is fully stocked with Friskies Pate or Shreds canned food (single flavored cases preferred), Purina Cat Chow Indoor dry food (green bag), unscented cat litter and Temptations cat treats. All donations are gratefully accepted. Our donation bin is located near the cash registers daily, thanks to Dave.

More information about our sanctuary may be found on our website at felinefriendsinc.org or our Facebook page at Feline Friends Cat Sanctuary. Contact us with questions at info@felinefriendsinc.org or by phone at 413-786-5019.

Library recognizes Mental Health Awareness Month

AGAWAM – May is Mental Health Awareness Month and the Agawam Library will be hosting two programs that focus on the wellness of our community. All month long, library visitors will be invited to contribute to our Beautiful Bonds Chain. Whenever patrons visit the library, take a moment to become aware of your mental state. Are you nervous? Excited? Happy? Leave a link with your answer -or a message of support- and we will add it to our chain. There will be colorful slips of paper at our public services desk. Our goal is to link these sentiments together to acknowledge that mental health issues affect everyone at different times and in different ways. As we emerge from the past year, the library would like support our community and recognize wellness in all its forms.

Join us on Monday, May 10 at 7 p.m. for Journaling for Wellness. Writer Lara Tupper will lead a meaningful discussion about the benefits of health journaling and tips on how to sustain self-awareness through writing. No previous writing experience is needed. On Thursday, May 13 at 7 p.m., Bernice Drumheller from The National Alliance of Mental Health of Western Massachusetts (NAMI-WM) will discuss the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on mental health. Learn the signs and symptoms of anxiety and depression and understand when to seek help. Both of these programs are virtual and will take place on Zoom. Please register

on our online calendar www.agawamlibrary.org. These programs are open to the public and all are welcome.

Our Seed Library and Exchange continues in the month of May. Visitors are welcome to browse for flower, herb and vegetable seeds. They may take desired seed from a labeled container and packet (please do not take the whole packet.) Envelopes are available to carry the seeds home. Visitors are asked to sign-out their seeds in the sign-out folder to the left of the display. Those wishing to donate seeds are asked to put them in an envelope with the date, growing instructions and type of seed (bean, pea, etc) Donors are also asked to log their donated seeds.

Please pardon our appearance while our library roof repair project gets underway. We will remain open during construction, but there may be days and times when collections or areas of the library will be inaccessible. We will do our best to provide our patrons with as much notice as possible when collections are closed. We ask for your patience in the coming weeks and we apologize for the inconvenience.

The Agawam Library is open Monday-Thursday 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Friday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The library vestibule is open Saturdays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. for pick-up only through the month of May. Please call the library with any questions 413-789-1550.

Horace Smith Fund awards \$297,000 to area students

WESTFIELD – Wayne Webster, Chair of the Board of Trustees, announced that this year The Horace Smith Fund will award 20 Walter S. Barr Scholarships, with 16 going to graduating high school seniors and four to students currently attending college. The William R. Rooney Award will be granted to one high school candidate who has received special needs services. Additionally, three Walter S. Barr Fellowships will be granted to students enrolled in full-time graduate degree programs. Providing that students maintain at least a B average in college, each scholarship provides a total of \$12,000 over four years, and each fellowship provides \$15,000 over three years. Therefore, The Horace Smith Fund is happy to be able to grant a total award of \$297,000 to area students this year.

The Horace Smith Fund was established in 1899 by the successful and generous philanthropist named Horace Smith.

He and Daniel Wesson were the founders of Smith & Wesson, located in Springfield. Mr. Smith’s will provided that the residual of his estate, after several bequests to relatives and institutions, was to be used for public purposes at the discretion of his executors. They decided that it should be used to help deserving students finance their education.

The Walter S. Barr Scholarships and Fellowships are named for a West Springfield businessman, whose widow left the bulk of the family estate to The Horace Smith Fund in 1950. The William R. Rooney Award is named for a past Executive Director with a desire to assist special needs students. All recipients must be residents of Hampden County.

This year’s scholarship recipients who are graduating seniors are from the following high schools:

Agawam High School: David C. Dagenais, Christian M. Rua

Eucharistic Adoration at St. John’s Wednesdays

AGAWAM – All are welcome and invited to join us at St. John the Evangelist Church, 833 Main Street, for Eucharistic Adoration, Wednesdays, 12 noon to 5:45 p.m. with Holy Mass at 6:00 p.m. Come and spend some time in quiet prayer with our Lord Jesus Christ, present in the Eucharist.

ARREST LOG

The Agawam Police Department responded to 925 calls for service from May 3 to May 9 and recorded the following arrests. No arrests in the public log have been omitted. All suspects are innocent until proven guilty.

Saturday, May 8

Emanuel Samuel Nieves, 24, of 64 Myrtle St., Indian Orchard, was arrested at 3:18 a.m. on a straight warrant.

Opinion

This Should Do It

By Walt Willard

YESTERDAY'S HOMETOWN NEWS

No doubt you don't want to read another column about the Class of 1923, but when you read the new evidence, you will believe, as most people with common sense, that we did have a graduation in 1923. First, some short items about a few former Brownies. That's what this column is supposed to be about.

A few walkers seen this spring - Louis Ramah, Al Fenney and Leigh Catchepaugh in Agawam Center; Mark Gormley and Tony Bianco in Feeding Hills.

I started barber school in Hartford in 1962 when I had just turned 16. It took me three summers to complete the six-month course so I could be a third-generation barber. Pepe's shop was in Easthampton and my dad's shop was on Allen Street in Springfield, where he cut the hair of Brownie Leon Letendre, Billy Ashton and the father of New York Mets player Kevin Collins.

Pete and Greg Lockhart and Angelo Polumbo all went to the same barber school. I wonder what they would say about the new men's hairstyles. My thought is a two-parter. You paid someone to do that to you? Why do you want to look like a turnip? Not sure if Greg Lockhart is still cutting hair in the center of Wilbraham, not far from the academy. He was Mr. Peach for years in the annual town celebration. Trying to tackle Greg on the

Phelps School lawn was like trying to tackle a pickup truck.

Bob Wodell and Kirby Strole were seen mowing their lawns, Bob in Feeding Hills and Kirby in Suffield.

How many in your AHS graduating class have grandchildren at AHS? My '63 classmates Marti Pilkington and Robert Cahill do. Moi aussi. Two each for the three of us.

Wrestling matches may be outside this spring. Can a match get rained out? Has that ever happened at AHS? Roof leak?

Ellen Janik is helping me with the HOF nomination of Fran Rosso '38. Her dad, George Beauchane was Fran's baseball teammate back in 1938.

Some things came in threes at AHS:

1. Mark, Robert and Stephen Nacewicz, triplets, were managers of the 1967 football team.

2. Three brothers, Jeff, John and Joe Martin were all players on the 1986 AHS boys soccer team, which won the 1986 Western Mass. Championship.

Now, for the Class of 1923. We told you that Harold Roos, president of the Class of '31, called his graduation the ninth one and that Creighton Abrams, president of the Class of '32, called his graduation the 10th one. Both of those statements imply that we did have graduates in 1923.

Some readers feel that since we had no seniors in the 1922-23 school year, that we therefore had no graduates. Here is the School Committee's ex-

planation of why we had no seniors:

"Your committee has decided to offer no senior course in the High School the first year, feeling that it would be poor policy for us both educationally and financially. That, of course, means that those who are now classed as juniors in other high schools will be allowed to remain another year for graduation.

"A senior course next year would mean numerous small classes and that would necessitate several additional teachers, causing a considerable extra expense for the instruction of comparatively few students."

What happened in our new high school that first year? Since only five Agawam students attended West Springfield High School, it's pretty clear that the would-have-been West Side seniors completed their last year of school in our new school. To save money, Benjamin Phelps combined them with the juniors. When June came along, he gave them diplomas. Proof of this is on page 335 of Edith LaFrancis' book, Agawam, Massachusetts:

"1923. Twenty-five in first high school graduating class."

Those who still think there was no Class of 1923 think Harold Roos couldn't count, Creighton Abrams couldn't count and Edith LaFrancis is an inaccurate historian.

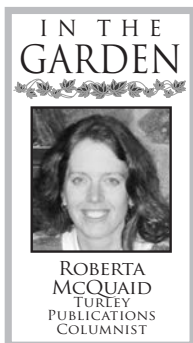
NOTE: Billy Ashton is Sandy Drzyzga's husband and Darrell's brother

Long awaited flowers for the wisteria

I was out shopping at one of the largest garden centers I have ever been to yesterday, and was tempted to buy a wisteria (along with a hundred other plants). My good friend is always talking about how pretty hers is and with an occasional picture sent my way, she is sure being modest. Her specimen is beyond pretty, more like gorgeous! I tried to remember back to the one we had growing at Old Sturbridge Village, long since gone now, but luckily I had written the following column, which gives some great advice for first-time wisteria owners, especially those who are waiting for theirs to bloom. Read on!

The wisteria was planted eight long years ago. Although the vines have overtaken the pergola beside which it was installed, there has never been a single flower...until this year! Finally, a handful of lavender-purple blossoms hang like bunches of grapes from the top of the structure. If I hadn't glanced up I probably would have missed this first effort entirely. I can only imagine how, in just a few more years, the show will be so breathtaking that everyone passing by will remark at its beauty.

There are two species of wisteria commonly grown by gardeners: Chinese wisteria (*Wisteria sinensis*) and Japanese wisteria (*W. floribunda*). Their twining vines are vigorous with a capital "V," quite capable of growing 25 or more feet tall. Wisteria are valued mostly for their purple toned or white flowers, which, as mentioned, hang in



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pendulant clusters in mid to late May, arriving just as the foliage is unfurling. The flowers are fragrant, and pea-like, accounting for the fact that plant is a member of the pea family. In addition to it being vigorous and pretty when in flower, the wisteria is hardy and long-lived. If there are Victorian era homes in your town, no doubt one or more will still sport a wisteria trailing over the front porch. Examine an old specimen up close and you will notice a gnarled, twisted trunk several inch-

es in diameter. Sometimes, with careful pruning, the vine can take on a self-supporting tree-like form.

Wisteria has the reputation of taking notoriously long to flower. Plants started from seed reportedly won't do so for 10 to 15 years! Those grown from cuttings, layers from the mother plant, or those that are grafted will bloom somewhat sooner, usually in seven to 10 seasons. To encourage early and dependable flowers, be sure to plant wisteria in full sun. Six hours of direct sunlight each day is necessary. Deep, fertile soil that is neutral to slightly acidic (pH 6-7) will grow the healthiest plants. Start off with a planting hole at least 24 to 36 inches in diameter and 18 to 24 inches deep, amending it with one-third its volume in compost, peat moss or well-rotted manure.

Wisteria also has the reputation of being able to "leap small buildings in a single bound," and topple the weaker ones to the ground! Be prepared by having a strong vertical support in place

prior to planting the vine. Trellises, pergolas or arbors will all suffice. Other, solid surfaces can be mounted with rows of copper wire for the vines to twine on. The copper won't rust and it will disappear among the plant material as it ages. Plant wisteria no deeper than it was growing in the pot from the nursery, unless it was grafted, then the graft union should be planted just under the surface of the soil. Water well after planting and throughout the first season of growth. A well-balanced fertilizer can be added annually.

Once the vine is well established, fertilize only if deficiencies are evident, and water only upon wilting. By discouraging vegetative growth, flower production will be encouraged. If numerous years have gone by and still there are no flowers, a heaping application of phosphorous in the form of superphosphate (0-20-0) may help. You can also try pruning back new growth severely in late spring or early summer. If that doesn't stimulate flowers the following season, try root pruning in late fall to "check" vegetative top growth. This is done by simply cutting into the soil with a spade four feet from the trunk to a depth of about 18 inches.

Sure, it may take awhile for wisteria to flower, but believe me, it is worth the wait!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 28 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturalist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to ekenedy@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.



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must include a name, address, and daytime telephone number for author verification purposes. We do not publish anonymous letters. All letters are subject to editing for content and length. The deadline is Monday at noon. Please send letters to Agawam Advertiser News, care of Turley Publications Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, or e-mail aan@turley.com.

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Chicopee’s regional vaccine site a reality

By Dalton Zbierski
Staff Writer

CHICOPEE – Four neighboring communities celebrated together on April 28, as a regional vaccination site began operating out of the Castle of Knights in Chicopee on Memorial Drive. The opening served as a tremendous accomplishment for all involved.

The clinic will administer state-allotted doses of the Moderna vaccine to residents from Chicopee, Granby, Holyoke and South Hadley and has the capacity to administer 800 shots a day.

After several weeks of discussions, the Department of Public Health approved the regional vaccination site at the Castle of Knights in late March.

Doses, however, were slow to follow. The operation remained uncertain until an opening date was announced in mid-April.

Weeks of waiting culminated in the April 28 opening, which drove Chicopee Health Director Lisa Sanders to tears.

“I’m so excited today. I’m used to being at this podium and telling you guys all the active cases we have, but it’s so good to finally tell you that we have vaccines in the city. It’s been so long, and I’m just so happy. Let’s fill up these slots and let’s just crush COVID,” said Sanders.

Chicopee Mayor John Vieau urged residents to get vaccinated and credited the first responders and medical professionals, who make the clinic possible.

Referencing the rising availability of COVID-19 testing and vaccines, Vieau expressed his belief that the state is making strong progress. Last Thursday, he emphasized the magnitude of the clinic’s opening.

“I have some scripted things that I’m not going to use; it’s not about being scripted today. It’s about getting the message out there. We’ve made vaccines available, and that was our goal,” said Vieau.

A number of speakers took to the podium at the Castle of the Knights on April 28.

Among them was Hampden County Sheriff Nick Cocchi, who praised all involved in manning the clinic.

“The heroes that are in this room today are not behind the podium. They’re out in front of the podium. I want to thank each and every one of you for stepping up and doing the work that you do,” said Cocchi.

Cocchi acknowledged that vaccinations are controversial. Nonetheless, he encouraged residents to book an appointment, even if only for peace of mind.

“One vaccine at a time will allow us to open up this Commonwealth and, then, that person, that family or that individual can feel confident about moving forward and doing so in a very safe and productive way,” said Cocchi.

Interim Holyoke Mayor Terence Murphy took to the microphone as well, thanking the students from Holyoke Community College’s nursing program, who are working the clinic. Murphy also delivered an important message to employers throughout the region.

“Without mandating, I would like to challenge employers to give your employees, especially those that are on low wages and can’t afford to give up a couple of hours in order to get vaccinated; to give them those hours with pay, which in the long run will make your business more successful and will allow the community to get together,” said Murphy.

South Hadley Emergency Management/Health Director Sharon Hart was on-hand to witness the opening on April 28; she commended the teamwork that led to the establishment of the regional clinic.

“This is amazing; the efforts they’ve put in to put this clinic together. Not only their efforts; they reached out to their neighbors, and it’s a collaborative effort. They’re our neighbors; they opened their arms, and we’re rolling up our sleeves,” said Hart.

One can schedule an appointment at the regional vaccination site by visiting [Mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine](https://www.mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine).



Holyoke Community College nursing students Shauna Martinez, Matthew Tetreault, Veronica Machuca, Edward Brewer prepare for the first day of the regional vaccination clinic that is operating at the Castle of Knights in Chicopee.



Holyoke Community College nursing students Brittany Lord, Christine Briggs and Yamaira Bejesus came out to work the first day of the Chicopee regional vaccination clinic.



After months of waiting, vaccines are available at the Castle of Knights in Chicopee.

Adoration at St. John the Evangelist

AGAWAM – All are welcome and invited to join us at St. John the Evangelist Church, 833 Main Street, for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. This event takes place Wednesday evening, May 19, from 7 to 9 p.m. following the 6 p.m. Holy Mass.

In this, the year of St. Joseph and the month of May, in which we honor our Blessed Mother Mary, let us come and spend some time in prayer with our Eucharistic Lord.

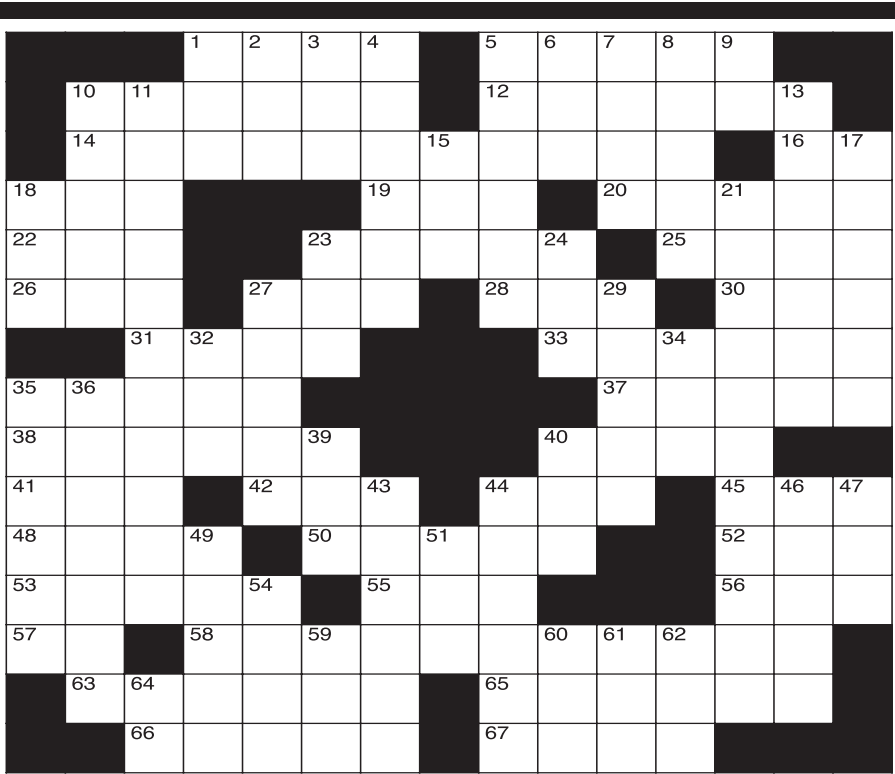
GRADUATION ■ from page 1

“The ceremony will be more student-centered, the band is playing, a senior student is singing; we’re trying to get as many students involved without making the ceremony too long,” Schnepf said. While the valedictorian and salutatorian will be speaking; they have not been chosen yet and will not be announced until to week of graduation. Schnepf said the scores are currently quite close and may take until the last possible minute to determine the two.

The school is following DESE guidelines along with state guidelines, so the event will be socially distant and require masks to keep everyone safe. Additionally, people can tune into the town local access channel to watch the ceremony remotely, the school is trying to accommodate as

many people as possible while staying safe and keeping up state standards. Schnepf said that he and the staff are trying to get through this year and have the ceremony ride as smoothly as possible, as for following years post pandemic Schnepf is unsure if the ceremony will return to Symphony Hall. While he doesn’t like to be so weather dependent, if the students and parents like this option better perhaps they will see more outdoor ceremonies.

During the last week of April parents and students were sent information on the graduation, and as more information is available it will be sent to parents and students. The graduation information will also be available online, after letters have been received. For more information people can visit the school website at <https://www.agawamed.org>



- CLUES ACROSS**
1. Large, flightless birds
5. Lifts and moves heavy objects
10. Hyundai sedan
12. Wear away by erosion
14. Arranged alphabetically
16. Top prosecutor
18. ___-de-sac: Short dead-end street
19. Digital audiotape
20. Linguistics pioneer
22. Singer DiFranco
23. Arms of the sea
25. Near-reach weapon (abbr.)
26. Ballplayer’s accessory
27. You get one at the beach
28. U.S. founding father
30. W. Australia indigenous people
31. Amounts of time
33. Put on the shelf
- CLUES DOWN**
1. Midway between northeast and east
2. Partner to cheese
3. One from Utah
4. A way to move
5. Playing cards
6. Baseball stat
7. Long river in western Asia
8. Grandmothers
9. Entertainment legend Sullivan
10. Steam bath room
11. One who kills
13. Food
15. Swiss river
17. Fleet
18. Taxi
21. Working class
23. More (Spanish)
24. High schoolers’ test
27. Large heavily built
- CLUES ACROSS**
35. Russian dynasty member
37. City along the Elbe River
38. A peninsula between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf
40. Actor Damon
41. ___ King Cole, musician
42. Company that rings receipts
44. Scatter
45. Basics
48. Part of a door
50. Indicates silence
52. Moved quickly on foot
53. Monetary units
55. A place to crash
56. Many subconsciouses
57. Group of countries
58. About line of latitude
63. Female follower of Bacchus
65. A dentist can treat it
66. Dull brown fabrics
- CLUES DOWN**
67. Int’l nonprofit
goat antelope
29. Murdered in his bathtub
32. Tease good-naturedly
34. Morsel
35. Cause persistent resentment
36. A radioactive element
39. Perform in a play
40. Witty remark: Bon ___
43. A great place to kayak
44. Conclude by reasoning
46. In an unfavorable way
47. Complex of nerve tissues (abbr.)
49. Machine for making paper
51. Feline
54. Yugo’s hatchback
59. Check
60. Press against lightly
61. Wind-pollinated plants
62. ___compoop
64. Commercial

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'Historic' tag sale set for May 16 and 17

AGAWAM – The situation in which the historic Captain Charles Leonard House in Agawam currently finds itself is not unique among nonprofit organizations or event venues – both have been particularly hard hit by restrictions imposed by the coronavirus pandemic. The Captain Leonard House, which has served as Agawam's Community House for more than eight decades, has struggled financially over the past twelve months due to a year of lost bookings and fundraisers.

In its first public event in over a year, the trustees of the Agawam institution will hold a giant tag sale on the Captain Leonard House lawn on Saturday and Sunday, May 15 and 16, from 9:00 am until 2 p.m. each day. All proceeds will aid in the preservation of the National Register-listed Captain Leonard House. In case of rain, the sale will be held at the same time the following weekend, Saturday and Sunday, May 22 and 23. Masks and social distancing will be required, and CDC guidelines will be observed.

Offered for sale will be antiques, furniture, collectibles, china, glass, silver, and new



A tradition of hospitality: the historic Captain Charles Leonard House, built as a stage tavern in 1805, has served as the Town of Agawam and neighboring towns as a community house since 1939.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

items. Crafts and vendors will also be on hand. The community is invited to participate as well, with tables offered at \$25 for the weekend. Those interested should call Phil Kimball at 374-5673 for more information or to reserve their table.

The Captain Leonard House, considered to be Agawam's finest Federal-era home, is available to rent for business functions and social events and is located at 663 Main Street in the center of the Agawam's National Register Historic District. Built in 1805 as a stage tavern to service travelers on the Hartford/Boston route, the Captain Charles Leonard House was restored in 1939 and has served as Agawam's Community House since that time. The house was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975.

Please call 413-786-9421 or visit <http://captainleonardhouse.com/facilities/> for more information about rental availability. For information about events at the house, follow the Captain Charles Leonard House on Facebook at www.facebook.com/captainleonardhouse/

Westfield State to offer SAT Online Summer Institute for high school students

WESTFIELD —Westfield State University will offer multiple sessions of its SAT Online Summer Institute for high school students, starting June 14.

In partnership with Educational Testing Consultants Inc., the SAT Online Summer Institute provides 20 hours of live, online instruction offered in multiple formats, including a condensed two-week session. Multiple sessions will be held, making it convenient for students to choose the time and format that works best for them to study and develop the essential test-taking skills

needed to do well on the exam. Students receive an in-depth review of the exam content, strategies for improving their scores, and a comprehensive study plan.

The cost of the SAT Online Summer Institute is \$499, which includes all books and materials as well as access to online resources through the end of the year. For more information, contact Brandon Fredette at bfredette@westfield.ma.edu or 413-572-8033. To register online for any of the available sessions, visit www.westfield.ma.edu/testprep.

Shredding event held this weekend

AGWAM – The Town of Agawam will host a free document shredding event for residents on Saturday, May 15 from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. at the DPW Annex, 1000 Suffield Street.

Valley Green Shredding will provide an on-site mobile shred unit to securely and confidentially shred residential documents for free. In an effort to service as many Agawam residents as possible, residents are asked to limit their confidential documents to 2 standard size boxes or 2 recycling bins per vehicle. All three-ring binders and

binder clips should be removed. Paper clips, staples, spiral bound notebooks are all acceptable. Due to COVID-19, safety protocols will be in place. Participants will be required to wear a mask, remain in their vehicle, and place all materials in the trunk, bed trunk, or cargo area of the vehicle. Staff will not accept material from the front seats of the vehicle. If you are sick or awaiting COVID test results, please do not attend the event. For additional information please contact the Department of Public Works at 821-0624

Plant sale set for Saturday, May 22

SPRINGFIELD – Saturday, May 22 is the Springfield Garden Club's Annual Plant Sale from 9 a.m. to 12 noon on the campus of the Springfield Museums, 21 Edwards Street, Springfield. The club members are excited to be able to offer a wide variety of

plants to the public again this year, with appropriate COVID-19 precautions in place.

A spring tradition and the Club's major

PLANT | page 12

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SPORTS

SOCCER

Pioneers return to action last Friday

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW — When Maxi Viera first joined the Western Mass. Pioneers back in 2012, he knew very little about the history of the club and about historic Lusitano Stadium.

Viera, who's originally from Montevideo, Uruguay, is one of the Pioneers veteran players on this year's team. He likes to tell the younger players how special it is to wear a Pioneers uniform and what it means to play home matches at the only soccer specific stadium in New England.

"Playing soccer matches at this stadium is very special because of the history," Viera said. "It's also very important for us to have a successful season every year because we're representing both the club and this community."

The Pioneers, who finished in first place in the Northeast Division standings with an 11-0-3 mark, qualified for the USL League Two playoffs in 2019. They kicked off the 2021 campaign by posting a 3-0 shutout win over Fall River FC in a friendly match held under the bright lights at Lusitano Stadium, last Friday night.

"The good thing about tonight's match is that I had the opportunity to watch 20 players play prior to our first regular season match," said Pioneer's head coach Federico Molinari. "We do have a bunch of returning players and a couple of newcomers. We just want to be a competitive team again this year."

Because of the COVID-19 protocols, no spectators could attend last Friday's friendly match. The 2020 soccer season was also canceled due to the pandemic.

"It was very strange not playing any matches for the Pioneers last year, especially following a very successful 2019 season," Viera said. "We really want to perform well this season and make the playoffs again."

What makes attending matches at Lusitano Stadium so special for the Pioneers faithful supporters is the atmosphere.

"It reminds me a lot of that soccer clubs that I played for back in Uruguay," Viera added. "The soccer fans here have a lot of passion for the sport. It's one of the reasons why we have so many international players on our team. When they come here and it feels like home to them, which is very special."

The Pioneers were scheduled to open the regular season with a road match against the Boston Bolts on Tuesday night. They're also slated to play another road match against FC Malaga City, who's a new team in the Northeast Division on Saturday night before hosting the Seacoast United Phantoms in the home opener on May 21.

The Pioneers officials are hoping a few fans will be allowed to attend the first home match of the regular season.

PIONEERS | page 9

RACING

Kruczek picks up win at Star Speedway

WALPOLE, N.H. -- Bryan Kruczek passed the entire field -- at least twice -- en route to his first career Granite State Pro Stock Series win at Star Speedway on Saturday, May 8. Kruczek, who was fastest in time trials and won his heat race, started seventh -- but had to go to the rear on at least two different occasions. The Bobby Webber Racing driver didn't let that slow him down, as he took the Vynorius No. 19 into Victory Lane in the third GSPSS race of the season, the Hedges Excavating 100.

"I'm out of breath," Kruczek said, climbing from the car. "I had to pass a lot of cars out there. I can't thank all of my guys enough, my guys are second to none. Bobby Webber lets me come out here and tells me to hand him the steering wheel or the trophy. We have some awesome sponsors."

Angelo Belsito and Joey Pole started on the front row -- with Belisto taking the early advantage looking for his second straight win, and former series champion Devin O'Connell mounting an early charge to the lead with 33 laps complete. Pole took the lead on a restart with 58 laps to go, but couldn't hold back the charges of Kruczek in the

SPEEDWAY | page 9

SOFTBALL



Pitcher Sarah Ross winds back and fires in Agawam's opener against Minnechaug.



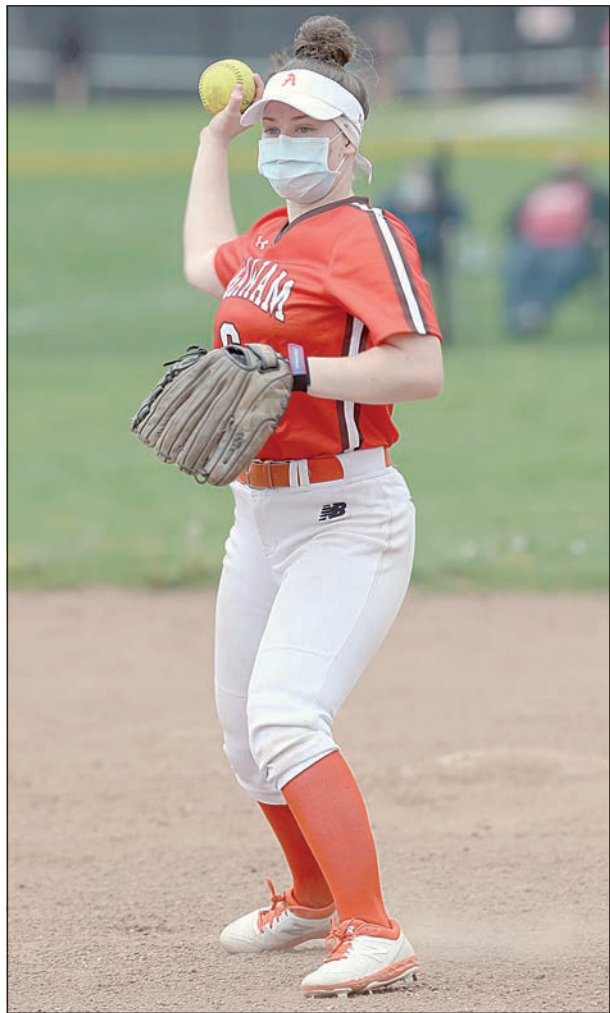
Sam Wheeler readies to hit.



McKenna Wheeler slides safely into second base.

Brownies trounce Falcons in opener

AGAWAM -- It's been a few years since Agawam was on the winning end of a game against rival Minnechaug. Last Friday afternoon, it was the first game in almost two years for both teams. Agawam prevailed 12-0, scoring seven times in the second inning to pace themselves to a mercy-rule win. Sarah Ross pitched a one-hit shutout and struck out eight. She also contributed a pair of hits and scored three times. Sarah Champigny had a hit and three RBI. Lynn Jang drove in a pair of runs.



PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

Lauren Plakias fires a throw to first.

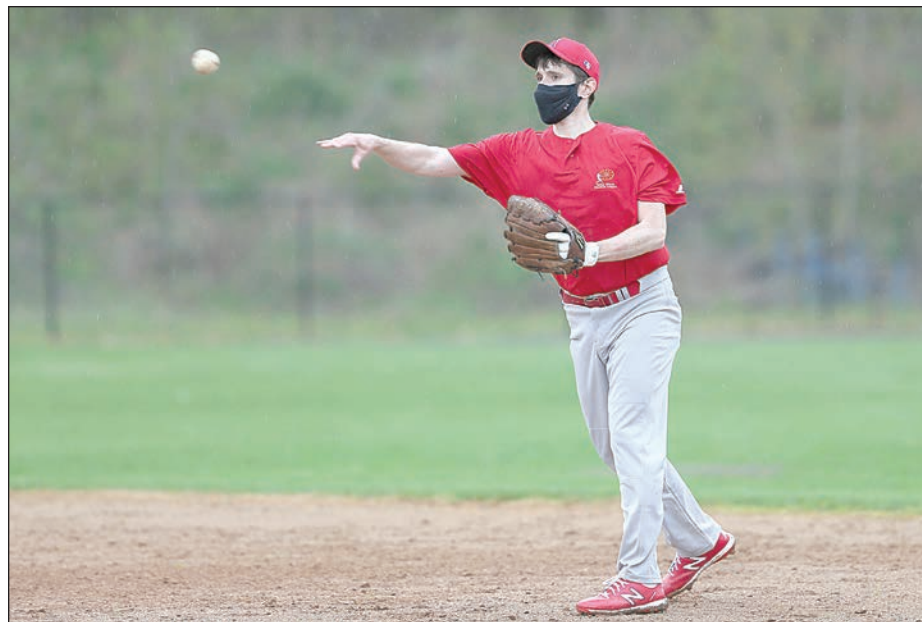


Kylie Circosta throws on to first to get an out.

Sports



Twins pitcher Dan Benoit fires to the plate.



Justin Morin makes a throw to first.



The Valley Wheel opened up play last week.

PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPOTOS.COM



Kevin Little, of Palmer, pitches in the opening game for the Angels at Suffield High School.



Angels third baseman Mike Dean, of Wilbraham, fields a grounder.

Valley Wheel action opens

SUFFIELD, Conn. – The Valley Wheel Over-28 Baseball League, like many other leagues in 2020, lost its season last year due to the pandemic. Players in the league participated in their first action in almost two

years last Sunday, May 2. The league features six teams playing most of its games on Sunday afternoons. The league did have its traditional Saturday matinee for Mother's Day weekend this past week.

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Sports

Premier Lacrosse League training camp to be held at Gillette

FOXBOROUGH – The Premier Lacrosse League (PLL) powered by Ticketmaster announced today it will be holding their 2021 Training Camp at Gillette Stadium from May 28 through June 3, 2021 leading up to their Week 1 matchups at Gillette Stadium.

“There’s not a venue as closely connected to lacrosse, with world-class facilities and amenities like Gillette Stadium and One Patriot Place,” says co-founder and CEO, Mike Rabil. “With our opening weekend of games slated for June 4th, our athletes will receive the best care while preparing for the start of the season on location.”

During this time, PLL players will take part in official team practices, scrimmag-

es, preseason workouts, film sessions, and educational workshops with their coaches ahead of their regular season debuts. Training Camp will be closed to the public, but tickets are still available for Opening Weekend at Ticketmaster.com.

“We look forward to hosting the PLL’s Training Camp at Gillette Stadium for the first time this spring, in addition to hosting the league’s Opening Weekend,” said Kraft Group President-International Dan Kraft, who was a collegiate lacrosse goalie for Tufts University in the 1980s and served on the executive Board of the 2018 Federation of International Lacrosse’s World Championships Host Committee. “Hosting training camp is another important step in our

strong relationship with the PLL and we cannot wait to welcome the nation’s best lacrosse players, including former Patriot Chris Hogan, back to Gillette Stadium. While training camp will be closed to the public, we are excited to welcome fans to Gillette Stadium June 4 through June 6 to enjoy five riveting PLL matchups all weekend long.”

As part of PLL’s Training Camp, pre-season exhibition games will be hosted at Veterans Memorial Stadium on June 1. More information on schedule and tickets for pre-season exhibition games forthcoming.

The PLL season will begin at Gillette Stadium for the second time, getting underway with a primetime matchup be-

tween Cannons LC and Redwoods LC under the lights on Friday, June 4. Saturday’s slate includes a championship rematch between Whipsnakes LC and Chaos LC, followed by Archers LC taking on Atlas LC. On Sunday afternoon, Cannons LC will return to the field against Waterdogs LC, and the weekend will be capped off with a matchup between Chrome LC and Redwoods LC.

The entire 2021 PLL season will be viewable on the NBCU family of networks, with all games available to stream live and on-demand on Peacock. The 2021 season will feature more than half of its games on NBC and NBCSN, with a full broadcast schedule to be announced at a later date.

PIONEERS ■ from page 7

For more information about how to purchase tickets online please visit wmpioneers.com.

Another returning player this season is Blake Mullen, who’s the Pioneers starting goalkeeper. He allowed a total of seven goals during the 2019 regular season.

“Whenever you start a soccer team, you normally begin at the back (goalkeeper) and work forward,” said Viera, who’s also the girls’ varsity soccer coach at Ludlow High School. “Blake had an amazing season for us two years ago. It gives you a lot of confidence having a talented goalie like him back there. We’re hoping he has another great season this year.”

Mullen, of Manchester, Conn., played soccer at St. Joseph’s College in Maine. That’s where he first met Molinari.

“I was playing for a National Premiere Soccer League team in Maine and Federico found me,” Mullen said. “I tried out for the team and I was a backup goalie my first year playing here. It was a step up for me and I learned a lot that season. Federico is an outstanding coach. I’ve also learned a lot from Jon Voight, who’s our goalie coach.”

Mullen became the Pioneers starter in 2019 and he was the USL League Two Golden Glove winner that season.

“It’s a very special award to me, but I couldn’t have done it without the help of my defense,” he said. “We had a great defense, and it was a special season for us.”

The Pioneers only returning defender is Federico Gutierrez.

Mullen has enjoyed playing home matches at Lusitano Stadium.

“It’s awesome when all of the fans are here supporting us,” Mullen said. “It pushes us to play a little bit harder because whenever you do lose a game at this stadium, the fans are disappointed. The atmosphere is always great following a victory.”

Mullen was replaced by Robert Montanaro in the middle of the second half.

Another returning player is Connor Hicks, who lives in Monson.

“I was mainly a practice player in 2019, but I did get to play in a playoff game,” said Hicks, a member of the AIC men’s soccer team. “It was just an awesome experience for me.”

When Hicks was younger, he attended a lot of the Pioneers games at the stadium.

“I remember coming to the Pioneers games when they played on a grass field,” Hicks said. “It’s now a turf field, but it’s one of the best stadiums I’ve ever played soccer at. I really enjoy playing soccer for this team. I know that I’ll have to work very hard at practice to get some playing time this year.”

One of the Pioneers newcomers is Gabriel Ganzer, who is from Brazil and is living in Chicopee. He scored a goal and added an assist during the first half against Fall River.

Guillermo Deal, who’s a returning player, and newcomer Andrew Barrowman scored the Pioneers other two goals.



Connor Hicks, of Monson, plays for the Pioneers.



Patrick Agymang dribbles toward the sideline.



Maxi Viera makes a dodge to keep the ball from being taken away.



Gabriel Ganzer makes his way up the field

PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

SPEEDWAY ■ from page 7

late laps.

Kruczek’s day included contact and a spin by Jacob Dore, which sent both to the rear, and contact and a spin with Evan Beaulieu, which sent both to the rear. He pitted multiple times to the attention of his Bobby Webber Racing crew, but the car was



Bryan Kruczek was the winner in the Granite State Pro Stock race last weekend. SUBMITTED PHOTO

right at the end. He passed Pole for the top spot with 24 laps to go -- however, a caution late gave Pole on last chance.

Pole edged out for the lead on the restart, crossing the line out front at lap 94 -- but slight contact a few laps later sent him backwards, and eventually spinning down the frontstretch, ending his day early. Kruczek held off a final charge from Josh King over the final laps to seal the victory.

King was second, followed by Dore, Belsito and Derek Gluchacki. Tyler Tomassi was sixth, while Gabe Brown, Beaulieu, O’Connell and Kevin Casper finished the top-10.

The Granite State Pro Stock Series returns to the track on Sunday, May 30, as part of a Memorial Day weekend special at Claremont Motorsports Park. For more information on the Granite State Pro Stock Series, visit gspps.net and follow the series on social media.

- The Finish:**
- Bryan Kruczek
 - Josh King
 - Jacob Dore
 - Angelo Belsito
 - Derek Gluchacki
 - Tyler Tomassi
 - Gabe Brown
 - Evan Beaulieu
 - Devin O’Connell
 - Kevin Casper
 - Bobby Cabral
 - Bill Helliwell
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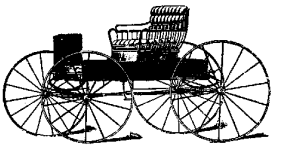
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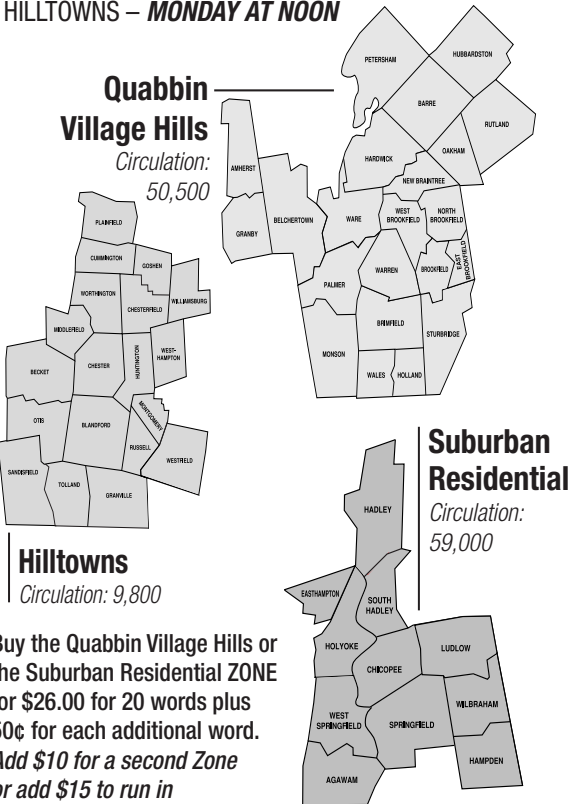
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SEWERS | from page 1

sewers to the area for many years.
“The people there in the southwest part of town,” said Rossi. “Have been promised sewers for more than 20 years.”
Rossi said even with some federal funding, it would still cost around \$15,000 in betterment fees per home. However, that cost is better than the \$25,000 to \$30,000 that was estimated in previous proposals made years ago.
The project has been put off for many years. There have been conflicting opinions on whether or not the area even wants the sewers, though more recently, there was a sentiment that the cost of hooking up to a sewer system had just

gone too high.
In normal cases, the sewer enterprise fund will bond out the project of installing sewers, and then charge each property that is able to hook up to the system a “betterment” because the sewer access improves their property value. Users must also pay for a physical hook up from their home to the roadside where the sewer runs. Pump stations and other infrastructure is also needed and part of the cost. Several residents have rejected the higher cost of betterments over the past 10 years while some other residents have wanted to cease using a septic system, which comes with its own expenses, including the cost of replacing it at different intervals.

POLICE | from page 1

rounding area.
The accident is under investigation, and the Agawam Police Department did

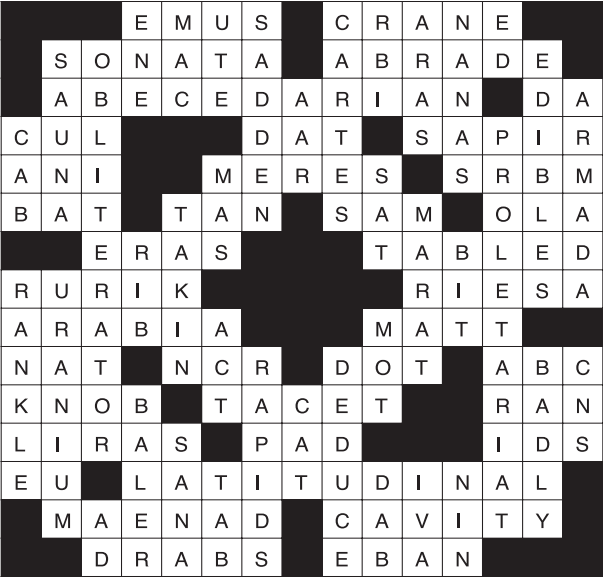
not release any details about what may have led to the accident. There were no details available on the driver of the vehicle involved and whether or not charges or citations were issued.

Public Notices

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TOWN OF AGAWAM PLANNING BOARD
The Agawam Planning Board will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, May 20, 2021 at 6:15 PM** to hear the petition of Agawam Mayor William P. Sapelli on a proposed Zoning Amendment entitled “Marijuana Facility Buffer Zone”. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the meeting will be held remotely through Zoom. Copies of the proposal can be obtained from the Agawam Planning Office at **pkerr@agawam.ma.us**.
To Join the Meeting: **https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81446541259?pwd=ZG04dFV0SEVIU1Q4TDJQSU80aTQ4Zz09**

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Resident participates in Model UN

WESTFIELD — Students from Westfield State University’s International Relations Club participated in two virtual Model United Nations (UN) simulation events in Montreal and New York City this semester. The annual events bring together students from all over the world to represent future diplomats, politicians, and activists.

Joseph Joyal, a senior economics major and IR Club member from Agawam, describes the Model UN process as “the hidden gem of Westfield State.” Joyal attended Model UN sessions the past two years and this year’s Montreal event.

“The incomparable experiences that we gain from participating in these models cannot be overstated. The Model UN allows you to take on an international perspective of issues that force you completely out of your comfort zone,” he said.

While McGill University sponsored the January event, the United Nations sponsored the most recent online simulation, which was held last month. Westfield State’s student representatives were: Mariam Aydah ’21, Iyanu Doxy ’22, Amanda Jefferson ’24, Joseph Johnston ’22, Ben Levy ’24, Kyle Rourke ’22, Ariana Torres ’21, and Melanie Voss ’21.

Voss, a political science major from Wrentham, Mass., believes that having access to Model UN opportunities as an undergraduate will serve her well in the future.

“The experience gained in Model UN is unique,” she said. “It’s an opportunity to learn about foreign policy and other countries in a situation where you feel included. It also allows you to get into the minds of these countries and their UN delegates.”

Johnston, a business major from Agawam, was initially worried about the online format, having attended other Model UN simulations in person during his time at Westfield State.

“After all, it is such an interactive event where you must communicate with your

peers constantly and effectively,” he said. “I didn’t think that we would be able to do that under the circumstances” he explained. “However, I was proven wrong. Both models we attended this year seamlessly adapted through two virtual platforms.”

Johnston explained that there were many new faces at the simulations this year and said there was “nothing but admiration” for the students who took this year’s unique challenge head-on.

The McGill University simulation—referred to as “McMUN” (McGill Model United Nations Assembly)—has solidified itself as one of Canada’s premier Model UN conferences. For over 30 years, students have worked together on platforms for debate, diplomacy, and problem-solving strategies.

Westfield State’s International Relations Club’s responsibility is to represent African countries at the events.

“While this can be a challenge, as many of these countries are undersized and underdeveloped, it forces us to be scrappy,” Joyal said. “Our program has something of a chip on its shoulder, coming from a relatively small state university and going against Ivy League and international students. In order to achieve our agenda, we form alliances with other small countries who have shared interests, and we are extremely crafty with our wording in drafting clauses to get them onto resolutions.”

Joyal believes the committee work they do—such as the solutions reached regarding international banking, border disputes, and sovereignty—is important, but it is also the conversations with the people met at the conferences that can affect the participants the most.

Reflecting on past in-person events, Joyal cherishes memories of meeting students from all over the world.

“Students from more than 50 countries attend the Harvard and McGill Models,”

he said. “I have made friends from Ghana, who I would chew on raw cacao and talk about rigged elections with.”

This year’s online format has been challenging, but—after taking inspiration from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic—students are working toward developing solutions to global problems.

“While we missed the interaction and connections we typically make, we still got a lot out of it this year,” said Joyal. “We dive deep into researching the issues affecting our country. In fact, COVID-19 has provided a unique experience in the models as it affects every aspect of international relations. How does the shutting down of borders affect refugees? Or hurt the economic output of developing countries? These are questions that we get to explore with a wide variety of students.”

Westfield State Political Science Professor Brian Steinberg, Ph.D., accompanied the students to each virtual event.

“The nature of our model UN work involves intense lectures within a tight time framework as our model UNs act as labs to the Comparative Foreign Policy course,” he said.

RMV cautions about scam

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles is cautioning customers to be aware of a text phishing scam that has been reported here in the commonwealth and in other states. The scam reportedly involves customers receiving text messages, claiming to be from the “DMV,” which direct them to click on a provided link to update their personal identifying contact information. Customers can identify this type of text as a phishing scam because it includes “DMV” and in Massachusetts DMV is not the name of the Registry of Motor Vehicles; in Massachusetts, the name of the Registry is abbreviated as “RMV.” Any text using the phrase “Department of Motor Vehicles” or “DMV” should be deleted.

Please note that the RMV does not send unsolicited requests for personal and/or contact information to customers by text. Any communication by text from the RMV would be as a result of a customer-initiated request or transaction. For the latest Registry updates and information, please check Mass.gov/RMV or follow the RMV on Twitter @MassRMV.

PLANT ■ from page 6

scholarship fundraiser, this is not the kind of plant sale that focuses on re-selling plants from wholesale growers. With the exception of a few donations from generous area garden centers, these plants are from members’ gardens or have been grown from seed specifically for the sale.

This is a major fund raiser for our scholarship program and a lot of fun for club members and our customers alike. We love to talk about the plants we are offering and, with many experienced gardeners and Master Gardeners among us, can offer useful suggestions on which

plants to buy or answers to some of your gardening questions.

The Springfield Garden Club awards an annual scholarship to a graduating high school senior, undergraduate or graduate college student majoring in a full-time plant science or environmental studies program, such as horticulture, floriculture, landscape design, conservation, forestry, botany, agronomy, plant pathology, environmental control, land management or other allied fields.

Using proceeds from past plant sales, the club has given out over \$70,000 in scholarships to students in the last 30 years and we look forward to adding to that this year.

Photo from Spring 2019

TITANS TOGETHER

Our community supports and celebrates one another, whether from across the room or across the globe.



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